

# How to Conduct the Every- M e m b e r C a n v a s s

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By J. Y. Aitchison, D.D.

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"I have carefully examined the pamphlet written by Dr. J. Y. Aitchison on the Every-Member Canvass, and can most heartily commend it to the missionary committees of our churches. We need this pamphlet in our Baptist Laymen's Movement; and I would most earnestly urge our missionary committees and canvassing committees to make generous use of it, in preparing for, and in carrying out, the Every-Member Canvass in our churches."

—W. T. STACKHOUSE, D.D.

General Secretary of the Laymen's Missionary  
Movement of the Northern Baptist  
Convention.

**“Let it be said at once, and as emphatically as possible, that mere ‘interest’ is not worth keeping up, and the sooner it dies of starvation the better, both for the churches at home and the missionary abroad. It is not interest but passion, the passion that comes from deep living and high thinking, that the church needs.”**

*—Bernard Lucas*



# How to Conduct the Every-Member Canvass

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## The Committee

### A STRONG COMMITTEE NEEDED.

Have a strong committee composed of your best people. Some of the greatest and busiest people of our country are serving on these committees. Why not? There is no other business of equal importance. Then, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it."

### PRAYERFUL PREPARATION.

Have the committee together two or three times for prayer and conference to consider the importance of the work before them and to get the details of it thoroughly in hand. The writer was once a book agent. The first day he sold only one book. The second day he sold fourteen. The difference was due to the fact that he spent an hour and a half at the close of the first day learning from an experienced agent how to show the book. The first day only one of the eleven people canvassed purchased a book. The second day only three of the seventeen people canvassed refused to purchase, and two of them bought books later. Same agent, same book, same class of people in each case, but not the same preparation for the work.

### HOW TO ASSIGN MEMBERS.

Do not divide the names of the members of your church by districts. When the committee is all together, read off your names and let those who are in closest spiritual relationship to individual members canvass them. Otherwise, some people will be approached by those who are not especially close to them, and, consequently, the results will be less than they might have been.

## SUBSCRIBE FIRST. THEN SOLICIT OTHERS.

Before the committee starts out, each one, after prayer and careful consideration, should make such a pledge to world-wide missions as his own conscience can approve. Failure is encountered in many cases where the members of committees have shirked their duty themselves and consequently have failed to lead others to do the right thing. No man can ask another to do a thing with the assurance that he will get a favorable reply unless he himself has a clear conscience that he is doing his own duty. This point cannot be over-emphasized and if it is overlooked it will rob the church of spiritual blessing and power.

## The Objective

### CHRIST'S PLAN AND PROGRAM.

The committee and the whole church and congregation should be impressed with the fact that in conducting this canvass they are placing themselves in line with the plan and program of Christ for the evangelization of the world.

### AN EVERY MEMBER CANVASS.

The church should thoroughly understand that it is to be an Every-Member Canvass. It is an injustice to rob any member or adherent (man, woman or child) of the blessing of giving simply because the subscription may be very small. "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Particular attention should be paid to securing subscriptions from children and members of the congregation who may not be members of the church. The children should be trained to give to missions early in life. It has been found to be a means of hastening a full surrender to Jesus Christ when one becomes a regular contributor to world-wide missions. Where one's money is spent there his interest is bound to center. He who gives to help bring others less favored than himself to a knowledge of Christ will think more seriously of his own relation to the Master.

While every member of the church and congregation should be canvassed for missions, some

will not subscribe when first approached. At the time such people are solicited it should be stated frankly that their refusal is not taken as final and that they will be given time to think the matter over. Either the same canvassers or others should see these persons again soon. One of the weakest places in the work of the church today is the lack of a follow-up system. Members are taken into the church and for want of an adequate follow-up system are allowed to drift away again in a short time, when they soon become a loss to the cause. People make a pledge to current expenses or missions, and for want of a little personal touch and encouragement at the right time they get hopelessly behind, become discouraged and quit.

Some will say, "This plan requires too much time and effort." But are we, as leaders of the church, upon whom rests the responsibility for the progress of the kingdom of God, prepared to accept the alternative of this position and admit we have not the time needed to develop the highest type of Christian manhood and womanhood in the Church of Christ?

### AN AVERAGE OF TEN CENTS PER MEMBER PER WEEK.

The definite objective in making the Canvass should be to secure an average of ten cents per member per week for world-wide missions, including state, home, foreign, publication society, woman's societies, etc., to be divided pro rata between the various societies on the percentage basis of the apportionment. Unless this objective is kept in mind you will fail to get the results that might be obtained. The people who are able to give more than ten cents must do so in order to even things up, as there are obviously many who can not give ten cents per week. It should also be borne in mind that some churches, in better circumstances than the average, should give more. There are churches that should be averaging from twenty-five to fifty cents, or more, a member per week. On the other hand, there are others that can not give ten cents a member per week. Hence, in order to do effective work, the committee must ever keep in mind the average and use

its best judgment in determining whether the individual or church being canvassed should be rated at par or is below or above the average of ability.

## **The Canvass**

### **GO TWO BY TWO.**

The best results have been obtained when the committee goes out two by two. This is the scriptural method and as such has been especially blessed.

### **SEPARATE CANVASS FOR MISSIONS.**

The canvass for world-wide missions should be made separately and with no other cause upon the hearts of the committee or before the church and congregation. The remarkable results which have attended the Every-Member Canvass, reported by the Laymen's Missionary Movement, have been obtained, in nearly every case, where churches have made a separate canvass for missions. Experience has demonstrated the fact that while the **CURRENT EXPENSE FUND IS INVARIABLY INCREASED** by the missionary canvass, yet when the canvasses for missions and current expenses have been undertaken together, the best results have not been secured. There is a natural rason for this. The appeal is weakened when the church centers attention upon its own work or fails to stress the urgency or importance of the great missionary task without the handicap of local needs.

However, any church that, for local reasons, decides not to make a separate canvass for missions, may have good results, though not the best, by making the missionary and current expense canvasses at the same time. But even then, subscriptions should be solicited for world-wide missions before they are taken for local expenses. In case the committee considers the subscription any member is already making to local expenses unsatisfactory, he may be re-solicited for local expenses after the missionary subscription has been secured. But remember Christ's order: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," first; then, "Give us this day our daily bread."

## MORE FOR LOCAL EXPENSES.

The separate missionary canvass, properly conducted, will bring new spiritual life and inspiration to the church and, in the long run, do more for the local expenses than a combined canvass could possibly do. When a person has made an adequate subscription to missions he will always be happy to meet his full share of the increased needs of the local congregation.

This may appear to some as if our only desire is to secure large missionary offerings and, failing to recognize the importance of local needs, we are willing to sacrifice the income for current expenses. Such is not the case. The very reverse is true. The income for local expenses is invariably increased as the result of the missionary canvass. The last thing our missionary societies can afford to do is to recommend a financial plan to the churches which will prove to be a burden rather than a blessing to the local interests.

## FIX DEFINITE TIME FOR THE REPORT TO THE CHURCH.

It should be announced publicly a week or two ahead when the canvass is to be undertaken and especially when the report of the completed canvass will be made. It is easier and far more successful to make the canvass in one week than it is to take three months to it. Announce when you begin the canvass that the work is to be completed and a definite report made at a certain time. This not only holds your committee to the work until it is completed, but creates a spirit of hopefulness and expectation in your church in which better results can be obtained.

## A Helpful Device

### A SQUARE FOR EVERY MEMBER.

It may greatly help the Canvass if a large chart, containing as many squares as there are members of your church, resident and non-resident, is posted in some prominent place in the church where it will be before the congregation during the whole year. Have each square represent the amount per week you have adopted as the objective for your church. If you decide



to aim for an average of ten cents per member per week, each square would represent \$5.20 a year. If you are aiming to secure twenty-five cents a member per week, each square would represent \$13.00 per year.

## HOW TO COLOR THE SQUARES.

As fast as your members subscribe, by use of a light red crayon color the squares for which subscriptions have been secured. If thought best the names of subscribers may be written in as many squares as are covered by their subscriptions. Use a blue crayon in squares of non-resident members, separating these by a heavy line drawn across the chart. Write each non-resident member, enclosing a copy of this pamphlet, explain what objective your church has adopted and ask for a subscription, stating that upon receipt of same the subscriber's square will be marked. Should any non-resident member send more than the amount represented by one square, his name may be written in as many other squares as are included in his subscription.

## The Appeal

### MONEY A LIFE-FORCE.

Money is power. It is a life-force. It requires time, thought, energy, to acquire it. When one has worked a day, a week, a month, and draws his pay, he holds in his hand a day's or a week's or a month's "worth of himself." As he spends this money so he spends himself. The man who pays his hard-earned money for dissipation invests his own life's forces in his destruction. A dollar spent in missions means a dollar's worth of life-power invested in the progress of God's kingdom. Mission money is twice blessed. It blesses him who gives and him who receives the gospel. Money withheld from missions robs two, the withholder and the one unreached by the gospel for want of funds.

### ACCORDING TO FINANCIAL ABILITY.

Ask and expect people to do generous things for the great work nearest and dearest to our Master's heart. Do not underrate the financial



ability of any member. It would be an insult to undervalue the members of your church socially, intellectually or morally. Certainly it is an insult both to them and to their God to underrate their ability and duty as stewards of God. No greater claims for the investment of hard-earned money can be presented than those set forth by Every-Member Canvass committees for world-wide missions. No one can be a member of a club or secret society who fails to pay his dues. Should one be allowed to think he is a member, in good standing, in the church of Christ, who refuses to obey the Lord's command to "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase?" "Will a man rob God?" Does a man deserve success in business who repudiates his obligation to his Lord?

The surplus wealth of our country is increasing at the rate of seventeen million dollars a day. Should our Lord have to go begging for the needed funds to carry his gospel to the ends of the earth? Yet we have no coin in circulation small enough to represent the average weekly gifts of our Baptist churches to either state, home or foreign missions.

### AN HONEST SHARE A COMMON DUTY.

When the average of ten cents per member per week will supply the Lord's treasury with the needed funds to do our share of the great missionary work pressing upon us as Baptists, is it not time for us to rise to this standard? The Baptists have the money. We are spending it—for other things. We submit, if an average of ten cents a week from each member would enable us to do a work worthy of our Lord and of ourselves, ought we not to give it? Can any church, or any member of any church, refuse to take less than his honest share of his common duty?

## An Ideal Worthy of Any Christian

### NEGATIVELY STATED.

I positively refuse so to give that if every other member contributed as irregularly and in the same proportion to his means as I am doing, it

would be impossible for my church to meet its missionary and current expense budgets. For if I have a moral right to do it, so has another member and so has every member.

### POSITIVELY STATED.

Hence, I will so give, week by week, to world-wide missions and the local expenses of my church, that if every other member of every other church should give, in proportion to his ability, as I am giving, the Lord's treasury would be adequately supplied with the funds needed.

### NOTES.

1. Over 300 Presbyterian churches in Illinois have agreed to make the Every-Member Canvass for world-wide missions. The Presbyterians, however, are working toward the definite objective of ten cents a member each week for Foreign Missions alone.

2. Non-resident members should not be overlooked in the canvass. It will do them good and help to hold them closer to the church if they invest their money in the great cause of world-evangelism.

3. Each member of the committee should be supplied with a copy of this pamphlet, "Suggestions to Leaders in the Every-Member Canvass" and "They Did It." Upon application to the District Secretary a copy of each, for members of the canvassing committee will be sent free to churches agreeing to make the Every-Member Canvass. Other helpful literature will also be supplied.

4. Many churches have used the duplex envelopes without having made the Every-Member Canvass. The results have been disappointing and some have blamed the duplex envelope system for it. The Every-Member Canvass, Weekly Giving and the Duplex Envelope are all vital parts of the plan which is working with such splendid results wherever missionary affairs are being handled most successfully.

5. Churches of two hundred members or less, agreeing to make the Every-Member Canvass for missions, will be furnished the duplex envelopes free if they have never used them before. They are also supplied at half price to churches of more than two hundred members provided they agree to make the Every-Member Canvass. This means the church pays for the side of the envelope used for current expenses, the missionary side being furnished free. Write to the Secretary of the General Apportionment Committee, Ford Building, Boston, Mass., for envelopes.

### PRICE.

Copies of this pamphlet may be secured for \$1.00 per hundred, postpaid.

# Results of the Every-Member Canvass for Missions in a few Baptist Churches in Different Sections of the Country.

	Before the Canvass	After the Canvass	Amount of Increase	Percent of Increase
Glenwood Ave., Buffalo, N. Y. (1)	59	364	305	516%
Dovercourt Road, Toronto	1461	6722	5260	359%
First Church, Piqua, Ohio (1)	97	300	203	209%
Delaware, Syracuse	400	1050	650	162%
Walmer Road, Toronto	6433	13144	6710	104%
Centerville, Iowa (1)	35	210	175	500%
Immanuel, Toronto	440	1622	1182	268%
Zion Church, Eglinton, Toronto (2)	20	208	188	940%
Jarvis St., Toronto	7108	18736	11627	163%
First German, Buffalo	349	840	491	141%
Walnut St., Thornton, Indiana (2)	62	207	145	233%
Downer's Grove, Ill. (1)	158	460	302	191%
Ninth St., Cincinnati, Ohio	900	2500	1600	178%

(1) Small Church

(2) Country Church

# *A Chance Meeting*

It was on the way to Church. He looked quite large. His name was QUARTER—or, to give his full name, MR. OCCASIONAL QUARTER.

She was not nearly so large, but was very bright. Her name was DIME—MISS REGULAR DIME. She went to church every Sunday in an envelope. MR. QUARTER went once in a long while just as he was.

As they turned in at the church gate, any one could see that MR. QUARTER was more than twice as large as MISS DIME, and he looked down on her and said: "You're pretty small to go in the offering. Look at me. When they count the offering, they'll say, 'Ah, here is MR. QUARTER.'" "Yes," said MISS DIME, "I've heard them say it, and more, too."

"What?" said MR. QUARTER, puffing himself out to look like MR. HALF.

"Oh, I've heard them say, 'It's a month of Sundays since MR. QUARTER has been here, while little MISS DIME comes every Sunday.'"

They went on into the church and MR. QUARTER didn't hear the sermon. He was busy counting up the times he had been to church during the year, and he found it had only been ten times. Then he looked over at MISS DIME and made a short computation: "I've been here ten times; that is two dollars and fifty cents. She's been here fifty-two times; that comes to five dollars and twenty cents. I begin to feel small." And from that day MR. OCCASIONAL QUARTER changed his mind and his shame and became MR. ENVELOPE QUARTER.

—From a New York Parish Paper.